FROM THE WORLD OF HELLBOY

SHADOW OF THE GOLDEN CRANE™

Story by CHRIS ROBERSON
Art by MICHAEL AVON OEMING
Colors by CHRIS O'HALLORAN
Letters by CLEM ROBINS

Cover by MICHAEL AVON OEMING with DAVE STEWART

President and Publisher MIKE RICHARDSON
Editor KATII O'BRIEN • Assistant Editor MISHA GEHR
Designer PATRICK SATTERFIELD • Digital Art Technician ANN GRAY
Prepress Technician JAKE JOHNSON

BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY MIKE MIGNOLA

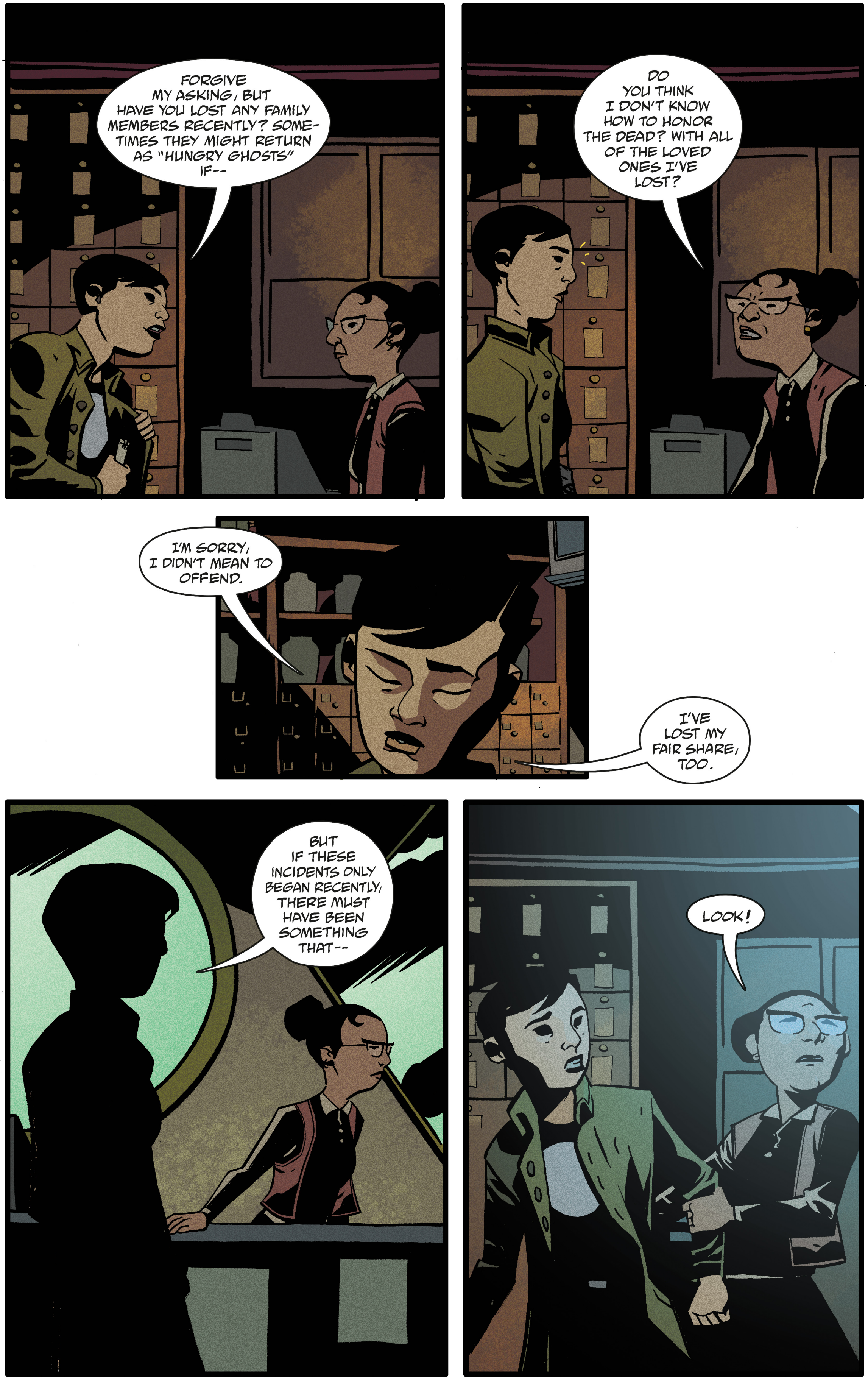
FSC www.fsc.org MIX Paper | Supporting responsible forestry FSC® C011825

DarkHorse.com • Facebook.com/DarkHorseComics • X.com/DarkHorseComics
Comic Shop Locator Service Comicshoplocator.com

SHADOW OF THE GOLDEN CRANE #3, April 2025. Published by Dark Horse Comics LLC, 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222.

Shadow of the Golden Crane ™ is copyright © 2025 Mike Mignola. Dark Horse Comics® and the Dark Horse logo are trademarks of Dark Horse Comics LLC, registered in various categories and countries. All rights reserved. Dark Horse is part of Embracer Group. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the express written permission of Dark Horse Comics LLC. Names, characters, places, and incidents featured in this publication either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, institutions, or locales, without satiric intent, is coincidental. Printed in Canada.

"I WAS INVESTIGATING AN APPARENT HAUNTING AT A CHINESE HERBALIST SHOP IN SEATTLE.
"BY THIS POINT I WAS ON MY OWN, AFTER VICTOR WENT TO HELP HELLBOY DEAL WITH WHATEVER MONSTER HE'D ENCOUNTERED DOWN IN CALIFORNIA."
AND THIS... APPARITION? CAN YOU DESCRIBE IT, MRS. WAN?
IT WAS LIKE... A STORM. OR AN ANGRY CLOUD. HERE, IN THE SHOP. THINGS FLYING EVERY-WHERE.


FORGIVE MY ASKING, BUT HAVE YOU LOST ANY FAMILY MEMBERS RECENTLY? SOME-TIMES THEY MIGHT RETURN AS "HUNGRY GHOSTS" IF--
DO YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW HOW TO HONOR THE DEAD? WITH ALL OF THE LOVED ONES I'VE LOST?
I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO OFFEND.
I'VE LOST MY FAIR SHARE, TOO.
BUT IF THESE INCIDENTS ONLY BEGAN RECENTLY, THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING THAT--
LOOK!

ANGRY CLOUD...
DON'T LET IT WRECK MY SHOP, I JUST GOT IN A BIG SHIPMENT FROM HONG KONG.
CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME?
IS THERE SOMETHING THAT YOU NEED?
HAVE ANY OF YOUR SHIPMENTS FROM HONG KONG INCLUDED AMULETS? CHARMS? HAIRPINS, MAYBE?
FWOOOOOOOOOSH

NO CHARMS OR AMULETS OR--
AH!
HOLD ON.
DID YOU FIND SOME-THING?
GOT A SHIPMENT OF HERBAL POWDER IN AN OLD METAL JAR.
MOVED THE POWDER TO A NICE PORCELAIN JAR, BUT I STILL HAVE THE OLD JAR.
LET ME SEE THAT...

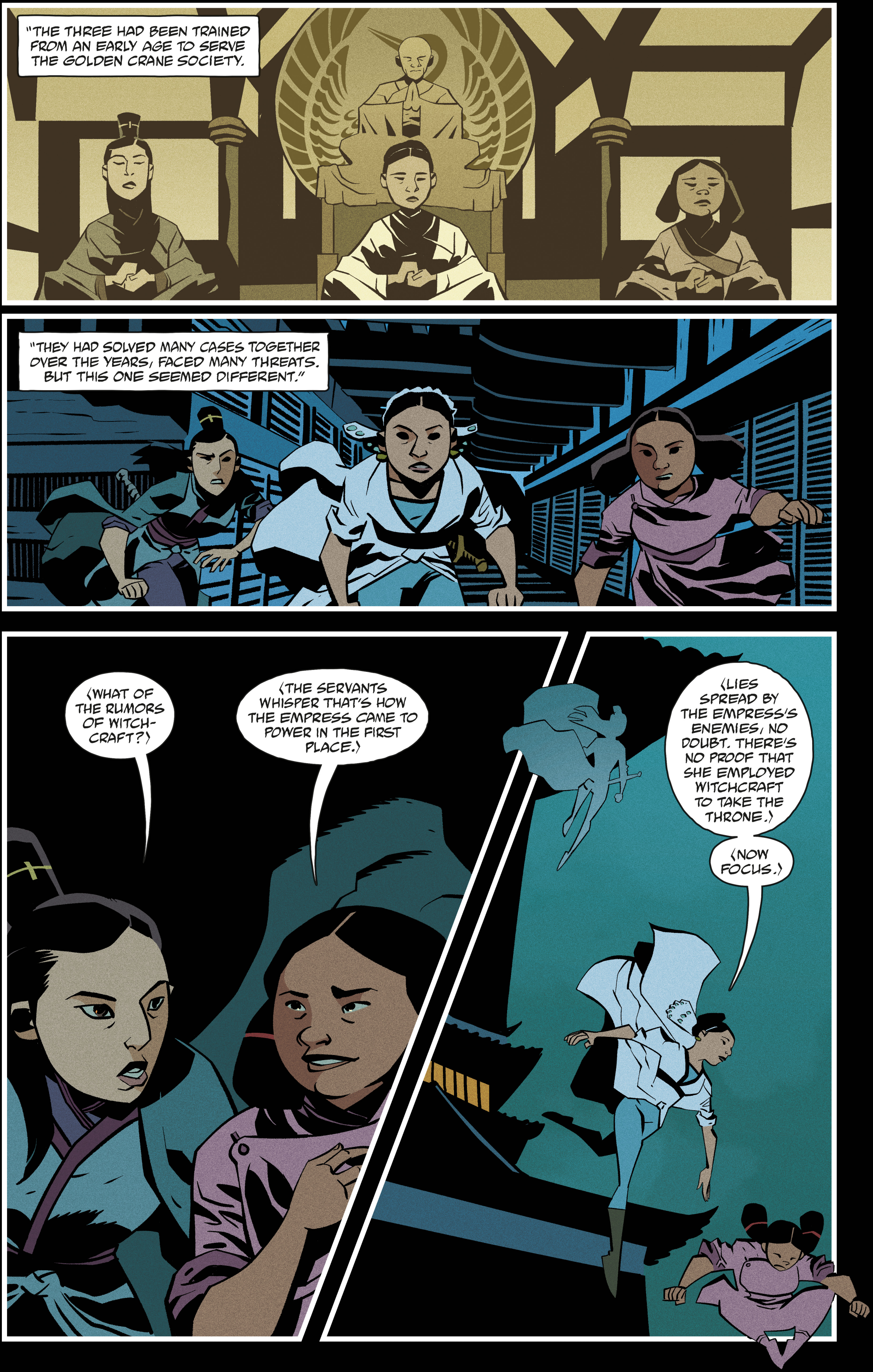
"THAT JAR HAD PASSED THROUGH SO MANY HANDS THROUGH THE CENTURIES."
SACRED CHARGE GIVEN TO YOU
"SO MANY LIVES TOUCHED BY WHAT WAS TRAPPED INSIDE."
WHEN YOU MUST ACT
"I FELT MYSELF PULLED TO ONE IN PARTICULAR."
"BUT REALIZED IT WAS NOT ONE LIFE, BUT THREE..."
SPEAKING TO YOU

"I SAW THE CAPITAL CITY OF LUOYANG IN 690 AD, DURING THE REIGN OF EMPRESS WU ZETIAN.
"CHINA'S FIRST, AND ONLY, FEMALE EMPEROR.
"I WAS LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF A YOUNG WOMAN NAMED YANG MEI.
"SHE APPEARED TO BE JUST ANOTHER COURTESAN.
"BUT YANG MEI WAS NOT WHAT SHE SEEMED."
⟨IF SHE'S NOT BACK SOON, I SAY WE MOVE WITHOUT HER.⟩
⟨RELAX, SHE'LL BE HERE.⟩
⟨TRANSLATED FROM MANDARIN⟩

⟨THERE SHE IS, I TOLD YOU SHE'D SHOW UP EVENTUALLY.⟩
⟨GAO ZHEN AND I ALMOST HAD A BET GOING THAT YOU'D GONE AFTER THE THING WITHOUT US.⟩
⟨IS THERE ANYTHING LEFT TO DRINK, I'M DRY AS A DESERT.⟩
⟨THERE IS IF LI CHEN HASN'T FINISHED IT OFF ON HER OWN.⟩
⟨I LEFT AT LEAST A MOUTHFUL, JUST FOR YOU, YANG MEI.⟩
⟨I HOPE YOU TWO HAVE HAD MORE LUCK FINDING EVIDENCE OF THIS "HAUNTING" THAN I HAVE.⟩
⟨I DON'T KNOW THAT I WOULD SAY "LUCK."⟩
⟨BUT THERE IS DEFINITELY SOMETHING GOING ON HERE.⟩

⟨I TALKED TO SEVERAL SERVANTS WHO HAD ENCOUNTERS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE PALACE, AND THEY WERE ALL STILL TERRIFIED.⟩
⟨I PERFORMED AN EXORCISM IN THE HOPES OF FLUSHING OUT ANY UNQUIET SPIRITS, BUT GOT NO RESPONSE.⟩
⟨WELL, I HAD MORE LUCK THAN THAT. I ACTUALLY SAW THE THING LAST NIGHT, JUST FOR AN INSTANT, BUT IT VANISHED BEFORE I COULD GET A GOOD LOOK AT IT.⟩

‹COME ON, LET'S GO FIND IT.›
‹WE'RE COMING, WE'RE COMING.›
‹I JUST HOPE WE FINISH THIS TONIGHT. I CAN'T WAKE TO ANOTHER DAY OF WASHING DISHES AND SCRUBBING POTS.›
‹ENOUGH. TO BUSINESS.›
‹WE HAVE THE HONOR OF THE GOLDEN CRANE SOCIETY TO THINK OF.›
"AND THROUGH YANG MEI'S EYES I SAW THE LIFE THAT THESE THREE WOMEN HAD SHARED.


"THE THREE HAD BEEN TRAINED FROM AN EARLY AGE TO SERVE THE GOLDEN CRANE SOCIETY.
"THEY HAD SOLVED MANY CASES TOGETHER OVER THE YEARS; FACED MANY THREATS. BUT THIS ONE SEEMED DIFFERENT."
‹WHAT OF THE RUMORS OF WITCH-CRAFT?›
‹THE SERVANTS WHISPER THAT'S HOW THE EMPRESS CAME TO POWER IN THE FIRST PLACE.›
‹LIES SPREAD BY THE EMPRESS'S ENEMIES, NO DOUBT. THERE'S NO PROOF THAT SHE EMPLOYED WITCHCRAFT TO TAKE THE THRONE.›
‹NOW FOCUS.›

⟨DON'T SEE ANY-THING...⟩
FWOOOOOSH
CRAASH
TT
⟨VASES AND STOOLS DON'T SEEM TOO BAD.⟩
⟨HOW ABOUT THAT?⟩

RRRRRWR
SSSSS
SLASH
SLISH

⟨REANIMATED PESTS? UNDEAD RATS AND CATS?⟩
⟨THIS ALL SEEMS MORE NUISANCE THAN MENACE, LIKE SOMEONE PULLING A PRANK.⟩
⟨THIS ISN'T A HAUNTING, **SOMEBODY** IS BEHIND THIS.⟩
⟨BUT IT'S DEFINITELY A **SOMEONE**, RIGHT?⟩
⟨IF SO, THEN THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE THEY COULD BE HIDING.⟩
⟨THERE'S A SERVANTS' PASSAGE JUST BEYOND THAT PANEL.⟩

⟨...VENGEANCE AGAINST OUR ENEMIES AND ALL WHO SERVE THE PRETENDER TO THE THRONE...⟩
⟨STOP! WHAT IS IT YOU DO HERE?⟩
⟨LICKSPITTLES! TRAITORS! WE REMAIN LOYAL TO THE OLD EMPEROR!⟩
⟨I THINK WE'VE GONE FROM NUISANCE TO MENACE.⟩
⟨OUR FALLEN MASTER WILL BE AVENGED.⟩

⟨YOU TWO DEAL WITH THE SPIRIT.⟩
⟨I'LL HANDLE THE WITCHES.⟩
⟨OF COURSE IT **HAD** TO BE WITCHES, I HATE WITCHES.⟩
⟨JUST A MOMENT MORE.⟩
⟨ENOUGH!⟩

⟨YOU CAN'T STOP US!⟩
⟨OH, NO?⟩
⟨THE LID!⟩
OOF!
TONK
SNATCH
SLAM
FWOOOOT

⟨WHY?⟩
⟨BECAUSE YOU ARE ANNOYING.⟩
⟨AND BECAUSE I CAN'T STAND WITCHES.⟩
⟨WE'LL LEAVE THOSE TWO FOR THE PALACE GUARDS, AND WE CAN BE ON OUR WAY.⟩
⟨AND I'LL TAKE THIS BACK TO THE GOLDEN CRANE SOCIETY FOR SAFEKEEPING.⟩
⟨DON'T WANT IT FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS.⟩

MRS. WAN, FIND THE LID TO THE JAR!
OH, I JUST SAW IT.
SHRIEEEK
TRY TO CALM DOWN, THIS WILL ALL BE OVER SOON.
FOUND IT!
PUT IT ON THE JAR!
FWOOOOT
SLAM

TINK
TAK
Whew
IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
IT'LL TAKE ME AGES TO CLEAN THIS MESS, AND EVEN LONGER TO EARN BACK WHAT I'VE LOST.
I THINK IT'S BEST I TAKE THE JAR WITH ME.
TAKE IT, I NEVER WANT TO SEE IT AGAIN.
IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE...

OH.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
THIS ISN'T OVER YET, BUT I KNOW WHERE I NEED TO BE.
TO BE CONCLUDED...